THE QUESTION OF ATTITUDE – Tony Downey.

Let’s have a look at the definition of the word Attitude. This definition is from a psychology textbook:

“An attitude can be defined a learned predisposition to believe in a consistent evaluation manner towards a person, group of people, or group of objects.”

That is, we all understand that an attitude implies a favourable or unfavourable evaluation which is likely to affect one’s response to the person or object concerned.

Examples spring to mind: This person is friendly and has a good attitude towards the other people in the group. We can also describe an attitude as the way you think and feel about someone or something. This feeling, or way of thinking, affects a person’s behaviour towards others and may even be regarded as rude or unfriendly.
Has anyone seen the new film, *Darkest Hour (2017: Perfect World Pictures/Working Title Films)*? This film is an excellent portrayal of Sir Winston Churchill’s impact on convincing the politicians and military leaders of Britain at the time of the Second World War in changing their defeatist view of ending the conflict by negotiation and risking a ruthless enemy takeover of Britain, or fighting on to eventual victory in 1945. Churchill’s attitude was totally convincing, which was just as well under those terrible circumstances.

Let’s look at another example of group attitudes closer to home for most of us, and their impact on subsequent behaviour.

Many years ago I was giving a series of talks to a group of people who had been unemployed for a very long time. These talks were arranged to take place once a week over several weeks commencing at 9am on any given Monday. On the very first day, a young woman wheeled in a pram with her baby. She was very upset. She really wanted to get a job but her parents lived in the country, her boyfriend and father of the child had up and left her, and there was no one else to look after the baby until a friend was willing but only in the afternoons.

These facts were put to the group who at first were quite hostile towards the girl. One thing was common to all members of this group – they had all been compulsorily directed to attend this class by Centrelink (the Australian federal government social welfare service). After the rest of the group came to know the problems the girl was facing in attending morning classes, all agreed that they would happily change the start-time to the afternoon. This was a great success and everyone completed the course.

But back to the psychology textbook!

Where do our attitudes come from? From many areas, of course. Parental influences come in as the child gets older. During the period from 10 to 20 years old, most of a person’s basic attitudes take shape – that is after those attitudes influenced by our experiences at work, peer pressures, and information from our education and, particularly these days, from the media.

An attitude is not a gift in concrete. It can be changed quite often and used to align yourself with whatever problems present themselves. Often we may see things from a different point of view. Different from both the individual and the listener. However, be careful of your attitudes, and use them as a means of growth, not only for yourselves but in your relationship towards others.

I would like to end with a quote from an American clergyman, educator, and famous Christian author, Charles Swindall:

“*The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company…a church…a home.*
The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can is to play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.” – Tony Downey, Melbourne, Australia.

Every day we have plenty of opportunities to get angry, stressed, or offended. But what you're doing when you indulge these negative emotions is giving something outside yourself power over your happiness. You can choose to not let these little things upset you. – Joel Osteen.

NEWS

International News: Newsletters from most Sections of our Theosophical Society are available from our Melbourne library. Our International Headquarters site includes contacts for all our Sections around the world at: www.theosociety.org
A comprehensive quarterly survey of all theosophical organizations around the world is compiled regularly by Steven Otto in Germany. Theosophy World News (Sohne des Feures) is available quarterly in English language at: http://www.soehne-des-feuers.de/international-theosophy-news

Meetings in Melbourne: All meetings are listed on our website at: http://www.theosophydownunder.org/library/meeting-programme/


New in the Melbourne Library: the Theosophical Pasadena Library Centre is at 664 Glenhuntly Rd, Caulfield South open on days of meetings or by special arrangement by phoning 0400942613. Books are available for loan to regular attendees at our meetings and U3A students attending the Ancient Wisdom course or by mail to members. The catalogue of books, and a list of the journals available in the library is on our website. Many thanks to those friends who have generously donated books to our Melbourne library, or the funds to buy new books.

Reza Aslan: God: a Human History; Dan Brown: Origin; I. Velikovski: Worlds in Collision; Barry Eaton: After-Life: Uncovering the Secrets of Life After Death; N. Lappapert translated from the German by H. Guest: Introduction to the Commentaries in the German Edition of the Mahatma Letters to A.P.Sinnett; H. Guest: A Layman’s Introduction to Asian Philosophies: Vol. 1 & 2; D.G. Haskell: The Songs of Trees; D. Coleman and others: Measuring the Immeasurable: The
Daffodils and Cancer: Could Daffodils help us cure cancer? It may sound like a folk fairy tale but according to researchers from the RNA Molecular Biology Laboratory, there exists a scientific link between cancer and an extract from the flower. Researchers have been able to extract a natural anti-cancer compound from the European-native Daffodils (Amaryllidaceae Narcissus) called haemanthamine. They observed that this compound blocked the production of a protein which is essential for the growth of cancer cells. The yellow flower, which is a symbol for numerous cancer charities, has been in use for centuries as a natural medicine and remedy.

New Discoveries about the Planet Jupiter: Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system – Jupiter’s diameter is 11.2 times larger than Earth. In other words, you could put 11.2 Earths side-by-side to match the diameter of Jupiter. And Jupiter’s volume is even bigger. It would take 1321.3 Earths to fill up the volume of Jupiter. In terms of surface area, Jupiter is 121.9 times bigger than the Earth. That’s how many Earths could be flattened out to cover the surface of Jupiter. Jupiter has 317.8 times the mass of the Earth! It’s a planetary puzzle of massive proportions:
what lies beneath Jupiter's turbulent shroud of blustery bands and mega cyclones?
Now, thanks to the Juno spacecraft, which arrived at the giant planet in July 2016, planetary scientists have been given a tantalising glimpse at the gas giant’s deepest secrets. Below whirling jet streams, 3,000 kilometres deep, lies a dense, rotating core of liquid hydrogen and helium. Under such crushing pressures, atoms are torn apart, and the fluid core acts like a solid mass. But the new data also toss up a mystery of their own: what's causing the strangely symmetrical, stable cyclones at Jupiter’s poles? Four papers, published in *Nature Today*, analysed the latest swag of data collected by the Juno spacecraft.

According to Theosophy, Jupiter is indeed more ethereal than Earth but in future will become more materially consolidated. The ‘Rector’, or God-like being in charge of the evolution of Jupiter, is also the Rector of Globe ‘B’ of the Earth’s chain and the Globe preceding Globe ‘A’. According to Theosophy, Jupiter is currently inhabited by huge fiery aeroform entities swarming in the area of the 'Great Red Spot' under the influence of a 'Raja Sun'.

**Trees Talk to Each Other – The 'Internet' of the Forest:** new research by Canadian forester, Suzanne Simard, show that there is a complex network in the ground below forests that enable trees to talk with one another and to behave like one entity. Simard has proved that forests aren’t simply a collection of trees, they're complex systems with hubs (Mother Trees) and Networks (of fungus threads or Mycellium) that overlap and connect trees and allow them to communicate and they provide the means for feedback and adaptation. This makes the forest resilient because there are many hub trees and many overlapping networks. But they are also very vulnerable if too many hub trees are cut down, or the networks of mycelium are upset with chemicals introduced by man. This research indicates that trees in a forest are not competitors but co-operators in a vast network of plant-life.

This indicates a basic principle of the Ancient Wisdom - Universal Brotherhood - the entire realm of Nature is linked by correspondences or analogies. Macrocosm/Microcosm. We can therefore understand Nature through Man. ‘As Above So Below’. Everything is related and has its source in the Divine. This Divine Source is Unknowable as it is beyond human knowledge, called by various names in different traditions – Ain-Soph (Jewish), Tat (Hindu), Unknowable God (St Paul), IT is the boundless source of All, Infinite Space, Eternal Duration, and Unending Motion. Universal Brotherhood is therefore a fact in Nature – now proved to be so in the plant kingdom too! More information on networks of Mycellium in forests – the ‘Internet’ of the forest is at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un2yBglAxYs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un2yBglAxYs)

**88,000-Year-Old Finger Bone Pushes Back Human Migration Dates:** the recent discovery of a human finger bone 88,000 years old beside a dried-up lake in Saudi Arabia (Al Wusta) suggests that the scientific understanding of the timing of ancient
human migration from Africa may be wrong. The common understanding amongst scientists at the moment is that human migration from Africa commenced about 60,000 years ago, but early human fossils found in Morocco place humans in western Africa 300,000 years ago, but few fossils have been found outside the continent from before 60,000 years ago. Then, in January 2018, an 180,000-year-old human jaw bone was found in Israel. The complexity of any migration from Africa by modern humans is obviously much more complicated than first thought.

Also, as Theosophy suggests, the age of humanity may be vastly older than modern science understands at this time. More information is available at: https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/04/saudi-arabia-finger-human-migration-homo/

**Scientists Accidentally Create an Enzyme that Can Eat Plastic Pollution:** Scientists have engineered a mutant enzyme that can eat and digest hard-to-recycle plastics – and they created it entirely by accident. The enzyme is a more developed model of the bacteria that Japanese researchers discovered in 2016. Their breakthrough made international headlines because of the bacteria’s ability to digest polyethylene terephthalate (PET). PET is favored for its lightweight, colorless, and durable properties that make it an ideal material for water bottles, plastic trays, blister packaging, and polyester clothing. Because it’s virtually invincible against microbes, however, the plastic never degrades, making it a pollutant scourge on the environment. Since the bacteria’s discovery, scientists at the University of Portsmouth and the US Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory have been trying to better understand how the bacteria is able to digest the plastic. In the midst of their studies, the scientists accidentally created a super enzyme that is derived from the bacteria – except it is even stronger than the original. The enzyme currently has the ability to break down the plastic in a matter of days, as opposed to the centuries it would take to naturally degrade in the ocean. The research team is now pursuing a patent on the enzyme so that they can develop its potential and increase its digestion time in order to wield the enzyme on a more industrial scale. And since enzymes are non-toxic and biodegradable, the discovery could be a major breakthrough in sustainably recycling the millions of tons of plastic that are polluting the planet.

According to Theosophy **Everything is Alive.** Nature is a complex hierarchical Being alive in all its parts. We exist and are an integral part of a living Universe. Nothing is ‘dead’ but there are differences in the state of consciousness according to the stage of conscious awareness. Hence our responsibility to look after our environment as part of a living Earth, and isn’t it heartening to see that we have the means to do so if we apply our knowledge to the massive task of cleaning up the world.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

People attending our meetings in Melbourne often ask: “What are your thoughts about controversial subjects such as Organ Donation, Euthanasia, Suicide, and Abortion?” These matters are for every person to come to their own conclusions, but Rita Houthuijzen from Holland writes recently to offer some valuable perspectives on these important subjects:

“... Organ donation: Nowadays great efforts are being made to recruit people willing to donate organs to other people who would otherwise die. In some countries governments are even campaigning in schools to persuade children to become donors. The situation has come to resemble a cattle market. Many organs are needed as people sometimes reject an organ and need another one. Government pressure to become a donor is steadily increasing, and there are plans to make everyone a donor unless they officially declare otherwise. This is a worrying development as many people will become donors without realizing it.

Humans are their own creators and are able to determine their destiny — consciously, but usually fairly unconsciously due to ignorance of their purpose in life and their true origin. Our physical body is only one component of our sevenfold nature. People also know little about the true meaning of their organs and other parts of their bodies. The liver, for example, retains memories of unprocessed feelings and events. Every part of our body is conscious.

This means that if an organ is transferred to another body, cell consciousness is transferred as well. It is well known that people who receive a new organ may suddenly start displaying different behaviour patterns or eating habits. A vegetarian may suddenly love meat, and a person who never drank alcohol may ask for an alcoholic drink. There are even examples of people dreaming about the donor, their way of life and how they died. A donor can be declared ‘brain dead’ before they have truly died. The body is kept alive because if the blood stops circulating, the physical body dies and the organs become unusable. But if the physical body has not died a natural death, that person is not fully dead and may still be present and aware.

An important issue in organ donation is the process a person goes through during and after their actual death. According to the ancient mystical knowledge, a deceased person leaves their physical body and spends a period in their astral body on the psycho-astral plane. This plane is very important for completely processing and reviewing the life that has just ended. What happens if part of a person’s body and consciousness remains behind in another body, as in the case of transplantation? Is the deceased still able to fully review and assess their past life without hindrance? Is the process delayed, or can the deceased go no further?

A patient who receives a new organ often rejects it and has to take a great deal of medicine to keep the organ. Everybody has their own rate of vibration, related to their level of consciousness. This also applies to organs and other bodily tissues in the donor and recipient. If the rates of vibration are very different, organ rejection will be more likely. People may choose to become organ donors out of compassion, but should ask themselves how compassionate this really is and whether it is really what
nature intended. The most important thing is to think about these matters for yourself and make your own decision.

**Euthanasia:** Euthanasia is a big topic of political debate. Recently Dutch politicians were even talking about allowing euthanasia for older people who feel that their life is ‘complete’, but Christian parties raised many objections. At present, people can sign legal declarations stating that they want to be euthanised if they ever find themselves in a situation where they experience unbearable suffering. Minors may request euthanasia from the age of 12, though parental consent is required. Doctors who fail to fulfil the due care criteria laid down by law can be prosecuted.

It may seem that euthanasia is a wise and compassionate act. The key question, however, is whether it is really the intention for people to end their suffering in this way. This question may seem harsh if there is no prospect of any improvement in a person’s suffering. But what really happens if people end their lives sooner? For every life there is a fixed end, a right time to die. It might be said that it’s also karma if someone ends their life earlier, but this is not entirely logical, because that person is interfering with the natural karmic consequences arising from past deeds and incarnations. It could also be said that inventing medicines etc. also affects the time we die – by postponing it. The ultimate consequence of both euthanasia and suicide is rather similar. After death we leave our physical body and find ourselves on the astral-psychic plane, or kama-loka, in our astral body. It is there that we review and judge our entire past life. Pain and injustice that we have inflicted on others will be intensely felt during the review of our past life. In the case of euthanasia, we will realize that suffering was a necessity and that we were not supposed to interrupt this learning experience. This is not intended as a judgement. On the contrary, this knowledge comes from the masters of wisdom, who have taught it for millions of years to those ready to receive it. They have also stated that if we end our lives sooner than the karmically determined time, we will experience repeatedly the pain and psychological suffering that preceded the moment we killed ourselves. This is a psychological hell, and it is of course far milder and shorter in the case of euthanasia than in the case of suicide. The causes of all the suffering in the world lies in people’s thoughts and deeds. The consequences are felt by individuals, families, villages, cities, countries and the entire world. This means that we need to change ourselves in order to bring about different consequences. By observing our own actions and the responses of others clearly and consciously, we set in motion an inner learning process – the mystical path inwards.

**Suicide:** Suicide is usually a desperate act by a person who is sick of life and still has a healthy body, but not a healthy mind. Some consider suicide an act of courage, while others consider it to be very selfish. We should not pass judgement, because nobody can truly know what drove the person concerned to take their own life. According to the ageless wisdom, we live to learn and deepen our understanding of life, its purpose and our role in it. If we end our life prematurely, we are forgetting
how precious human life is, for the body is the temple of the spirit and enables us to learn our lessons in the material world.

Everyone is able to add something to the overall karmic pattern of life. Suicide interrupts this process. It is true that our next life will provide a new opportunity, but if we’re unable to overcome certain problems in our present life, we will encounter them again in a future life – perhaps in a different place, in different situations and with different people. That’s why in each life we should try to overcome difficulties instead of giving up. Those who commit suicide will suffer all their psychological pain again on the astral plane until the time comes when they would have died a natural death.

**Abortion:** In the case of abortion, instead of the unborn individual deciding on their own death, the decision is made by someone else. It is very difficult to obtain a clear insight into this matter, because we don’t know exactly what this means for the unborn soul.

Humans are sevenfold beings and a long process precedes the birth of the physical body. It is a spiritual process, in which a new body is prepared for an old soul, who will again get the chance to refine their inner being and expand their consciousness. The formation of our other bodies begins long before the moment of fertilization. If the process is interrupted by abortion or a miscarriage, the soul will have to wait for another opportunity to incarnate. Many faiths reject abortion altogether. On the other hand, women throughout the world have struggled hard to be ‘the boss of their own belly’ (as the Dutch put it). There is a great deal of emotion on both sides. If a woman is raped, abortion is understandable, but the situation is different if a woman has been very careless. Abortion involves the deliberate killing of a fetus, though it is not motivated by aggression but by despair or perhaps indifference.

However we think about organ donation, euthanasia, suicide or abortion, life is a precious gift. Respect for life should always be given precedence, and life always has purpose, whatever happens. We should bear in mind that we are more than our bodies alone, and that all our actions have karmic consequences for ourselves and others. We should make our own decisions and not judge others, for ultimately everyone has their own free will and their own responsibility. – *Rita Houthuijzen, The Netherlands.*

*Your talent is God’s gift to you, What you do with it is your gift back to God – Leo Buscaglia.*

Beneath the façade of nature’s calm serenity a mighty battle rages on. In the verdant fields of bucolic bliss where sunlight shimmers softly on the treetops, in the ocean’s deeps where water sings harmoniously its thalassic Neptunian hymns, in the cloudless skies of azure blue where the heavens open wide in a cosmic coruscating embrace; here exists a world of war.

Struggle permeates life. It encapsulates it, ensnarls it, defines it. Nothing that exists can be understood except as the product of a ceaseless conflict of opposites. Strength and weakness, war and peace, truth and falsehood, love and hate, courage and fear. Life is a dualistic clash of dichotomic extremes: the high and low; the determiner and the determined; the seeker and the sought.

This conflict, though, upon a deeper analysis, reveals itself to be, in truth, not so clearly a conflict at all – but rather, the omnipresent and enduring interplay of polarising forces by the interaction of which manifestation on the various planes becomes possible. And thus, the ugly mask is ripped from the face of the necessity of struggle to unveil the magnificence and beauty of this amaranthine kosmic process whereby the simultaneity of creation and destruction is maintained in perfect and unending equilibrium.

This, then, is the eternal kosmic dance of Shiva and Shakti – the infinite play of Power and Will – of Positive and Negative forces – as manifested in the multiplicities of life. The pendulum swing of our phenomenal existence is determined by the roaring waves of karmic undulation upon the sea of ceaseless motion that is our kosmic existence. In our surrender to the rolling waves is to be found an underlying centre; a firm foundation amidst the rising and falling of diversified forms. The task of the seeker is to discover the balance that permeates the passage of life and thus to venture forth amid the waves, bold and sincere in the fulfilment of his duty – his dharma in the kosmic play – whilst remaining yet ever present and ever still in that sacred region that exists beyond the bounds of Time, Space, and Duration; that eternity which is the Everlasting Now. Such a one is a karma yogi – a force of action in inaction, and of inaction in action; a dancer in the Kosmic dance in which he lives, and moves, and has his being. Tat Tvam Asi - Luke Michael Ironside, The Philippines.

For most of us, life is made up, not of great sacrifices or duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindness, and small obligations given habitually, are what preserve the heart and secure comfort for everyone. – Humphry Davy.

A SENSE OF HUMOUR: the principle founder of the Theosophical Society, HP Blavatsky, once said that the three most important qualities in esoteric study are, “Common sense, A Sense of Humour - and then more Common Sense!” Let’s pause in our studies for a laugh every now and then!

- A man was talking to God. “God, how long is a million years?’ God answered, ‘To me it is but a minute.’ The man said, ‘God, how much is a million dollars?’ God said, ‘To me, it is but a penny!’ Then the man said, ‘God may I have a penny?’ God said, ‘Wait a minute!!’
• A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and enquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car. His father said that he would make a deal with his son, ‘You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car.’ The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he’d settle for the offer and they agreed on it. After about six weeks his father said, ‘Son, you have brought your grades up and I’ve observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I’m disappointed you haven’t had your hair cut.’ The boy said, ‘You know, dad, I’ve been thinking about that, and I’ve noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there’s even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair.’ Dad’s reply, ‘Did you also notice that they all walked everywhere they went?!’

• When the famous comedian, W.C.Fields, was an old man, he was often seen to be reading the Bible when he had not shown much interest in religion during his life. A close friend asked him what he was looking for in the Bible: ‘Loop-holes, dear boy, loop-holes’, W.C.Fields replied.


**Summer Solstice, The Great Renunciation:** Following the initiations of the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox comes the event of the Summer Solstice, at which time the neophyte or aspirant must undergo, and successfully prevail over, the greatest temptation known to man just referred to; and if he (meaning humanity, ie men and women) so prevail, which means the renouncing of all chance of individual progress for the sake of becoming one of the Saviours of the world, he then takes his position as one of the stones in the Guardian Wall.

Thereafter he dedicates his life to the service of the world, without thought of reward or of individual progress — it may be for aeons — sacrificing himself spiritually in the service of all that lives. For this reason the initiation at this season of the year has been called the Great Renunciation.

**Why a ‘Great Renunciation’?** This initiatory cycle is called the Great Renunciation because it involves the giving up of all personal progress for the sake of helping our suffering world. Such initiants become members of the ‘Hierarchy of Compassion’ comprising the ‘Guardian Wall’ protecting humanity from the results of its unthinking invoking of cosmic forces which might possibly destroy us in an instant. Such service includes the ‘damming back’ of humanity's accumulated karma, defending us against physical and psychic threats to the planet including invasion by ‘rivers of lives’ circulating around the solar system on the inner planes which could threaten our existence.
It must never for a moment be supposed that the Great Renunciation implies an abandonment of any single part of the manifested universe in order that the neophyte or aspirant may devote himself only to following the sole pathway of light. This in itself is a subtly spiritual selfishness which is the spirit governing the career of the Pratyeka Buddhas. It is necessary for the neophyte or chela who desires to pass through even the first gateway of the initiation leading to the Great Renunciation to understand that instead of abandoning the world he remains within it, in order, as he grows greater and stronger, wiser and loftier, to serve ever more largely in the cause of all things that are.

**The Hierarchy of Compassion:** There are many grades of those who take the path of the Great Renunciation:

- first, the loftiest ones, the very gods themselves who lean from their azure thrones, so to speak, and who communicate with those of the same hierarchy but who are less than they.
- the Buddhas of Compassion;
- the Masters of Wisdom and Peace;
- the High Chelas (meaning spiritual students accepted by a Master of Wisdom);
- the Chelas of Lower Degree;
- Ordinary Men and Women who feel within themselves the upsurging force of the mighty fire of compassionate love which, at times at least, fills their hearts with its flame.

Celestial Buddhas, Dhyani-Buddhas, Manushya-Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Masters, Chelas, Inferior Chelas, and Great and Noble Men and Women — there in brief is the line or ladder of being which forms the Hierarchy of Compassion.

It must never be supposed that the Great Renunciation implies that, once taken, this debars one from further initiation. The Great Renunciation implies, rather, that the entity so devoting himself consecrates himself to a series of further and ever loftier initiations, but with the sole and single purpose of rendering himself ever more fit for transmitting the divine light to others less advanced than he, and for that purpose alone.

**Autumn Equinox: The Great Passing:** Then, finally, comes the fourth and last period of the cycling mystical year, the event of the Autumnal Equinox, which perhaps is the most sublime ... because in the initiation of the Autumnal Equinox the neophyte or aspirant passes beyond the portals of irrevocable death, and returns among men no more.

One line of this activity, lofty and spiritual but yet not the line of the Hierarchy of Splendour and Compassion, is that followed by the *Pratyeka Buddhas*. Aeons will pass before these Pratyeka Buddhas reawaken to take up anew the evolutionary journey, the evolutionary pilgrimage. The Autumnal Equinox is likewise straitly and closely related to the
investigation, during the rites and trials of the neophyte, of the many and varied and intricate mysteries connected with death. For these and for other reasons it has been called The Great Passing.

Of all the four sacred initiatory seasons of the year, none perhaps is so difficult to describe as the events and trials and success that belong to the initiation of the Autumnal Equinox, technically called the Great Passing - the recondite and in some cases dread mysteries of death.

This is the time of the final choice between becoming a Pratyeka Buddha and spending aeons in the bliss of Nirvana, or, to become a Buddha of Compassion (Amrita Buddha) returning to a suffering Humanity on Earth such as the Christs and Buddhas do and lending a helping hand.

**The Ultimate Choice:** There are two distinct but not conflicting elements of the teaching regarding the Autumnal Equinoctial Initiation:

1. All the greater initiants must pass through this initiation, but they return. They taste in it of death and vanquish it; and in the words of the Christian scripture they may say: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" because the initiate has truly conquered death, and its mysteries in all their various phases are to him mysteries no longer.

2. The second element of the teaching is the fact that armies, multitudes, crowds, of human beings, at some time in their evolutionary pilgrimage, choose this initiation with deliberation for the sole purpose of passing out of the world and ken of men, to return no more. Such are the Pratyeka Buddhas, and those who, like them, prefer the bliss of individual nirvana to the self-sacrificing but sublime life and destiny of a Buddha of Compassion

**Understanding the Upper Worlds:** The Great Passing is the fourth and concluding initiation which every Master of Wisdom must go through, and the glories of which he must renounce. In this initiation leading to complete Masterhood, the initiate must indeed, as in the preceding three initiations, pass through the Underworld; but his goal this time is principally the mastery of the Upper Worlds.

Here then, in this initiation, are learned all the intricate and very mysterious secrets connected with Death, some of them sublimely beautiful, and some of them dreadful beyond any ordinary human imagination. The entire framework of the constitution of the initiate must be ruptured and torn apart for the time being, so that the divine part of him may wander the stars of our galaxy.

The divine monad returns to its own parent star and passes from star to star, ranging and wandering among them, familiarly and fully at home. What takes place in the case even of the ordinary human being when he dies, and which to such ordinary
individual is blank unconsciousness because he has not evolved far enough to understand what he is undergoing, must to the freed divine monad of the master-initiant be made fully conscious and clear.

Every phase of the process of death that takes place in ordinary human beings is undergone by the initiate at this time: sheath after sheath of the soul is dropped and abandoned, cast aside and for the time being forgotten, until the naked divinity stands alone, a living fire of energy in self-consciousness and self-cognizing memory.

**Where Were/Are These Initiations Held?** The places of initiation are/were often situated on mountains which, because of this, were regarded locally as holy mountains. Often rocky caves or recesses in mountains were chosen for their inaccessibility, and used as initiation crypts or chambers.

Examples would be the Himalayan Mountains and the Nilgiri Hills in India, parts of the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia, and man-made structures such as the Elephanta Caves in India, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the Great Pyramid at Gizeh in Egypt.

**Seven Degrees of Initiation:** Various countries and traditions have different numbers and names for each degree. Essentially it is the same process – an accelerated evolutionary journey to overcome the power of the Ego/Lower Self, and by degrees grow closer to the Higher Self/Inner God within us all.

The ancient Egyptians had three degrees/stages with several sub-stages, personified under the ‘Three Guardians of Fire’ in their mystery tradition. In the Greek/Roman system the process of spiritual initiation was usually configured as Seven Degrees as follows:

1**st, 2**nd and 3**rd Degrees: Probation:** are preparatory, consisting of discipline of the whole nature: moral, mental, and physical and balancing of the emotions. At each stage, the neophyte has to pass through a carefully graded series of tests or trials in order that he/she may prove his/her inner strength and capabilities to proceed.

4**th Degree: First Self-Conscious Encounter With Other Planes of Reality:** the powers of his/her inner god having by now become at least partially active in his daily life and consciousness, he/she is enabled to begin the experience of passing into other planes and realms of life and of being, and thus to learn to known them by becoming them. In this way he/she acquires first-hand knowledge of the truths of nature and of the universe about which he previously has been taught.

5**th Degree: First Direct Meeting With The Inner God: Theophany** (the appearance of a god), the candidate meets, for at least a fleeting moment, his own spiritual ego face to face, and in the most successful of these cases, for a time actually becomes one with it. Epiphany signifies a minor form of theophany.
6th Degree: Taken Over By The Inner God For a Time: Theopneusty (in-breathing or through-breathing of a god, divine inspiration), the candidate becomes the vehicle of his own inner god, for a time depending on the neophyte’s own power of retention and observation, so that he/she is then inspired with the spiritual and intellectual powers and faculties of his/her higher self.

7th Degree: Permanently At One With The Inner God: Theopathy (the suffering a god — suffering oneself to be one’s own inner god), the personal self has become permanently at-one with the inner divinity. The successful passing of the seventh trial resulted in the initiant’s becoming a glorified ‘Son of the Sun’ as the ancient Egyptians would say, to be followed by the last or ultimate stage of this degree known in Buddhism as achieving Buddha-hood or Nirvana.

Since limits cannot be set to attainment, however, still loftier stages of spiritual and intellectual unfolding or initiation await those who have already attained the degree of Buddha-hood.

Does This All Really Matter For Our Daily Lives Here and Now? The attempt to lift our state of consciousness also helps with uplifting Humanity as we are all connected at an inner level of our composite nature. As HP Blavatsky reminds us:

‘It is an occult law, moreover, that no man can rise superior to his individual failings, without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part. In the same way, no one can sin, nor suffer the effects of sin alone. In reality there is no such thing as ‘Separateness’. ” The Key to Theosophy: page 203.

The greatest and simplest preparation for all the various grades of initiation is our daily life. Here one can prove what he/she is made of; here he can show the stuff that is in him; here he can strengthen his character, evoke his will, enlarge his understanding, expand his heart-life.

The Masters judge, or rather test, a beginner, a neophyte taking his first steps, by the way in which he acts in daily life and reacts to the temptations and trials that daily life puts upon him. Life is the great school, and that all the initiations, without a single exception, are but higher grades, the reaching of higher classes, in the school of life — life terrestrial and life cosmic.

All Initiation Is Essentially Self-Initiation: We have the opportunity everyday in our interactions with other people to express the qualities of the Inner God that will make sure we keep to the ‘Path of Compassion’ and one day perhaps, stand ourselves at the entrance to the Temple of Initiation, as did those brave souls in days long gone and, do even today, at the threshold of the Temples of Initiation in hidden places around the world.
Some Further Reading:

- More information on the qualities Theosophy encourages us to develop in our daily lives can be found in G de Purucker’s book ‘The Path of Compassion’.
- Information on the cycles of spiritual initiation throughout the year can be found in G de Purucker: ‘The Four Sacred Seasons’.
- Detailed information on the initiation ceremonies of the ancient world can be found in Grace Knoche’s book: ‘The Mystery Schools’.
- All of these books are available from our Melbourne library, or free online at: http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ts/tup-onl.htm

– Condensed from G de Purucker’s book ‘The Four Sacred Seasons’ available free online at: http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/4sacsea/4sacsea.htm with additional comments by Andrew Rooke, Melbourne, Australia.

Next Issue - a new series commences: Modern Physics and the Ancient Wisdom: Part 1: The Theory of Relativity – having trouble understanding the complexities of modern physics and how it relates to the Ancient Wisdom? This new series will explain the basic concepts of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics in easy to understand language without the complicated mathematics!

“It was not possible to formulate the laws of quantum mechanics in a fully consistent way without reference to consciousness.” – Eugene Wigner, theoretical physicist and mathematician. He received a share of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1963.

“Everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms, is conscious: i.e., endowed with a consciousness of its own kind and on its own plane of perception.” – H. P. Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine 1:274.

BOOK REVIEWS


In the early 21st century we know for certain that most of the hundreds of billions of stars in our galaxy have planets, and that many of them have planets that could possibly sustain life as we know it. One day, in the short or long-term future, we are going to realize, as the Ancient Wisdom affirms, that the Universe is teeming with life – in fact is a form of life itself. What would our civilization and its religions do when we encounter intelligent life from another world? Could humanity and its religious institutions handle the truth that we are not alone in the universe? This book sets out to investigate some of the implications of this question that is bound to become more relevant as we come to know more of this living universe - of which we are only a tiny part.
The author sets out to survey the major religions of the world and sees whether they could withstand such a discovery. Major philosophical questions such as; would aliens know about Jesus, God, or any of our religious concepts at all? Is the concept of Original Sin confined to humans only? Is Evil universal or just confined to the Earth? Do aliens have their own Redeemers? Is the Christian or Islamic God, the God of the entire Universe? Is the Earth special in any way in the scheme of Creation?

The author examines all of the major religions in the world and finds that the belief structures of Jews, Roman Catholics, Quakers, Seventh-Day Adventists, and members of the Bahai faith should allow them to accept the reality of extra-terrestrial (ET) life without having to deny their own beliefs. The faith of Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Jains have no problem in accepting the reality of life on other worlds. The logic built within their faiths for Muslims, Methodists (Uniting Church), and Mormons that their religions are meant only for sentient beings who are residents of the Earth and that their prophets spoke only for Earthlings should permit most of them to accept that extra-terrestrials might have their own religions and prophets.

In contrast, many Orthodox Christians, fundamentalist, and evangelical Christians may struggle to reconcile their beliefs with the news that extraterrestrial life exists, especially if extraterrestrials are intelligent and technologically more advanced than we are, which indeed must be the case if they were to reach us.

In my understanding, Theosophy has no problem at all with the existence of extraterrestrials. The basic propositions of the Secret Doctrine indicating that the Universe is a Living Being of which all beings are a part (like a hologram), and the periodic manifestation of this life force would hold for every quarter of the Universe. G de Purucker writes at length about alien life within our solar system (and by implication, outside our solar system) in his book, The Fountain-Source of Occultism. Theosophy would agree with modern science that the basic laws of physics and quantum mechanics which researchers have observed and speculated upon throughout the material universe would also hold for all civilizations wherever they exist in the manifest universe.

The book ends with selected details of the approx.4,000 ‘Exo-Planets’ currently known to exist outside our solar system. Such planets are the necessary basis for possible life on other worlds, and we now know that they are literally everywhere in the Cosmos. As the author says in this fascinating book:

“While [science tells us that] we may not live in a special place in the universe, we may however live during a very special time: some of us may be alive when astronomers discover life beyond the Earth. Given the high likelihood that this discovery could occur soon, perhaps we should seriously consider beginning to prepare ourselves philosophically and theologically for this coming change in how we will understand ourselves and our place in the universe.” (page 209) – review by the editor.

If you want to know more about Theosophical ideas about life on other worlds please see the article: ‘Is there life on other worlds?’ at: http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/sunrise/52-02-3/sc-rook4.htm
The Buddha said: ‘It is necessary to live the life to understand the doctrine’ – but how do we ‘live the life’ when we are subjected to the pressures of modern life seemingly driving us in the opposite direction. Katherine Tingley, former Leader of our Theosophical Society, was very concerned with this question. Her books, such as, *The Gods Await, The Wine of Life, Traval of the Soul*, and, *Theosophy: The Path of the Mystic*, are dominated by the practical considerations of putting Theosophy into action in our daily lives.

In, *Theosophy: The Path of the Mystic*, she deals with challenges associated with the duality of human behaviour, the sacred responsibilities of marriage and family life, the role of women, esoteric considerations for child-rearing and education, the mystic path in a stressful world, the importance of imagination and visualization, self-control and esoteric discipline, prison reform, and the role of music and art as spiritual influences in daily life. As she says in this book: “My aim is to make theosophy intensely practical, intensely serviceable.” – p.109.

Katherine Tingley not only preached these values, but the Point Loma community she established near San Diego, California, was specifically designed to put these ideas into action and to provide an example of the Mystical Path others could follow in appropriate ways around the world. Throughout the book Katherine Tingley emphasises the necessity of seeing the ‘divine spark’ in ourselves and others, developing self-control, being conscious of duality in the human condition, and practically applying spiritual inspiration from theosophical teachings into our actions in the world.

Although this book was first published almost 100 years ago, its primary message to ‘practice what we preach’ in Theosophy is highly relevant to today’s world and to the current emphasis in the work of our Theosophical Society. For this reason, if not for the beauty of the language and images that Katherine Tingley evokes in the reader, *Theosophy: The Path of the Mystic*, and indeed all her books, are highly recommended to 21st century theosophical students. – review by the editor.

From *Theosophy: The Path of the Mystic* by Katherine Tingley:

“…The question naturally arises: what can bring about a change for the better? What factors can be introduced that will readjust our home life as nations … and bring it nearer to perfection? Men and women should study the laws of life and the responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood even before marriage. Home should be acclaimed as the centre from which the higher life of nations is to spring.” – p.127.

“…There is no idleness for the Mystic. He/she finds his daily life amongst the roughest and hardest of the labours and trials of the world perhaps, but goes his way
with a smiling face and a joyful heart, nor grows too sensitive for association with his fellows, nor so extremely spiritual as to forget that some other body is perhaps hungering for food.” – p. 49-50.

“...If we are to help humanity in a new way, we must begin to think in a new way.” – p. 111.

“...Just as when studying music one has to ‘place’ the voice, so in studying Theosophy one has to ‘place’ the mind; that is, one has to find the right mental attitude in order to understand.” – p. 111.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE: PLAYGROUNDS OF THE SOUL - Don Shepherd

In turning to the second and third fundamental propositions in H.P. Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*, the “Being” of the unborn cosmic atom frolics on the “Be-ness” of the “boundless plane” of the “Eternity of the Universe.” The boundless plane is the immaculate white disk or the “Eye of Self-Existence.” It is the Eye of Self-Existence for two reasons. First, the vision of the “Be-ness” of unconditioned consciousness operates as a seeing without objects. No otherness exists for this type of seeing; therefore, the seeing is self-existent. Second, the vision of the “Be-ness” never becomes distracted by exteriorizing the process of its seeing to take into account its own luminescence. There is no process of exteriorizing vision in ultimate reality. But since the flip side of ultimate reality is a conventional reality of constructed appearances, the self-existent must reflect a self-appearance. The theoretical fall from the unconditioned consciousness of “Be-ness” to the consciousness of “Being” occurs when that self-appearance is taken to be real. There is a type of consciousness in the luminescence of the immaculate white disk that takes the self-apparent reflection of the self-existent to be real. This consciousness becomes distracted by the luminescence of the immaculate white disk and exteriorizes the vision of the luminescence as something other than itself. But unable to comprehend the luminescence in its wholeness, it views that luminescence as an underbelly of darkness. This underbelly of Space is the Universal Oversoul; the viewing consciousness is the Soul. Captivated by the contrast between itself as a luminescent spark and the darkness of its mother, this consciousness grasps at the otherness in which it resides. Due to its grasping, consciousness explodes into a
self-conscious spark that shoots across the vast expanse of the latent Universal Oversoul. The playground of this active Soul is the blackened underbelly of its mother Space and the luminescent boundless plane of its father, the Eternity of the Universe.

With the exteriorizing of the vision of the Universal Oversoul through its spark, the luminescence of unconditioned consciousness has to be shadowed by the darkness of bare subjectivity; bare subjectivity, though a highly spiritual parent-source, is the beginning of ignorance. The Soul, having gestated in the moistness of its parent Universal Oversoul, becomes, when the proper hour strikes, one of the “manifesting stars” and “sparks” in eternity against the backdrop of the Eternity of the Universe “in toto”—meaning both the Parabrahmanic luminescence and the Mulaprakritic darkness. The Mulaprakritic darkness, as the “Universal Mind or Space,” has “its ideation which is projected into objectivity at the appointed time,” but it itself is “not affected thereby.” This ideation of divine thought pours into the Soul from the Universal Oversoul. The Soul then manifests this divine thought as the great cosmic intelligence of Mahat to the numberless universes “incessantly manifesting” from and “disappearing” into it as the pilgrim monad. The numberless universes have to manifest and disappear because all the member monads of an infinite series cannot exist at the same time in the same way. The light of these universes illuminates the darkened underbelly of its mother and reunites with the luminescence of its father. Mulaprakriti, as the root of matter, provides the magnitude for the potentially infinite Parabrahman to always have a part beyond itself. As such, Parabrahman and Mulaprakriti serve as the “playground” of the Soul. Observing the distinction between unconditioned consciousness and bare subjectivity, the Soul replicates that dualism into the processes of “Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking” that preside at the heart of the smaller universes that it itself emanates, oversees, and lives within.

The combination of Parabrahman and Mulaprakriti is the playground for the Soul, but it develops a new playground with the emanation of its own universe. The Soul, as Kalahansa or the Swan of Time, glides through the womb of its mother Mulaprakriti to drop the Mundane Egg as the origin of a seven-fold universe. When the Soul incarnates into its own universe, a seven-fold system is used to explain its subdivisions. In the seven-fold system that H.P. Blavatsky used in the third fundamental proposition in *The Secret Doctrine*, Atman as Parabrahman is the Universal Seventh principle, Buddhi as Mulaprakriti is the Universal Sixth principle, and the Soul is the “spark” that “issued from the pure Essence of the Universal Sixth principle” to become the Universal Fifth principle of Manas. But in its figurative transformation from pure Essence into awakened intellect the spark must also break into the four lower planes of conventional reality. In those lower planes corresponding to Kama, Prana, Linga, and Sthula, this spark must acquire “individuality” first by “natural impulse” and later by “self-induced and self-devised efforts” in order to fully develop its own mental capabilities and ultimately return to its source, the Universal Oversoul.

But in her deeper writings H.P. Blavatsky actually held to a ten-fold system for the Cosmos in its universal, super-spiritual and physical “completeness.” In this ten-fold system, the Soul, as the exteriorizing consciousness of Parabrahman and Mulaprakriti, is the culmination of the first *in potentia* three-fold monadic combination.
on the first, second, and third cosmic planes. Viewed from below, it is the “One” in the “Universe of Illusion” (conventional reality) above “the seventh principle” of Atman. This “One” is Mahat, the receptacle of cosmic intelligence from the bare subjectivity of Mulaprakriti. What happens is that the Soul touches Atman as the Universal Seventh principle on the fourth cosmic plane and then it retreats back into the “Silence and Darkness” around the immaculate white disk. But the thrill of that touch flutters through the fifth cosmic plane of spiritual Buddhi that acts as the reservoir for the beings in “Being” to emerge as unique manasic individualities on the sixth cosmic plane. As a result of impacting these lower objective planes, the Soul, as the tip of consciousness downwards in the three uppermost subjective planes and linked with Atman as the tip of consciousness focused upwards on the highest of the seven objective planes, transforms into the “Heavenly Man”—the first four-fold Tetragrammaton. Atman becomes the receptacle of the powers of the Soul. While the initial playground of the Soul is Parabrahman and Mulaprakriti, it gains a new playground by tinturing the Atman, becoming enmeshed in the spiritual Buddhi, and enflaming the intellect of Manas. This combination of “Atma-Buddhi-Manas” is the second three-fold monadic combination but in the manifestly objective worlds on the fourth, fifth, and sixth cosmic planes. Because the second monadic combination of Atman, Buddhi, and Manas is a reflection of the first monadic combination of Parabrahman, Mulaprakriti, and Mahat, the terms become interchangeable when switching between explanations for a seven or a ten-fold system. Having reached the stage of Manas in its descent, the Soul, as the Swan of Time, journeys along the coils of Ananta-Sesha, or the cosmic Serpent who carries the suns and the planets along his back, through the four lower planes (or seven, eight, nine, and ten) of the objective world.

To make this clearer, the unconditioned consciousness of the immaculate white disk of ultimate reality is the “Hansa-vahana” that uses Kalahansa, or the Swan of Time, as “its vehicle” to awaken consciousness in conventional reality. The Swan of Time, as the Hindu Brahma or the male-female “Archetypal man” who of androgynous necessity must drop his own eggs, creates its universe as the auric egg of Atman. The potent subjective force of the Swan of Time reverberates through the egg’s seven cosmic planes stirring the consciousness centers of suns and planets into “limitless objectivity” as “secondary” aspects of its cosmic power. Within a solar system, the Swan of Time follows the planets along Ananta-Sesha’s back as they reach the lowest plane and then coil upwards to return to their source in a dance between bird and snake along the sacred caduceus or spinal cord of the Cosmos. H.P. Blavatsky diagrammed this descent of the ray of the Swan of Time as the solid rod of the caduceus; she diagrammed the pathway of the planets from and to their source of origin as the two-headed serpent. The two-headed serpent is coiled in a four-fold chain link, representing the four lower objective planes that must be awakened. The Swan of Time descends on the left-hand side through those four lower objective planes stimulating the principle of each planet into activity. The Swan of Time re-ascends on the right-hand side arousing the respective principles of those planets with their corresponding lives. Reaching the summit, Kalahansa reassumes his proper place in all his winged glory. His mission is complete. As the carrier of Hansa-vahana, Kalahansa imprints the subjective three-fold nature of Parabrahman-Mulaprakriti-Mahat onto the Atman-Buddhi-Manas of the three highest objective planes, which then carries his potent force to the four lowest realms of Nature.
This entire evolutionary journey undertaken by the Soul once it emerges from the Universal Oversoul is the “Sutratma” or “Thread-Soul” of the individual cosmic experience. The journey begins with the Universal Oversoul and its root “point” of light in the center of the “perfect Circle.” This root point of light is the “re-awakening” of the universe in its seven lower objective planes. The journey culminates in the perfect Circle bisected with the sign of the cross. The sign of the cross symbolizes the journey of each Soul spark from the Universal Oversoul through the elemental, mineral, plant, and animal stages to acquire human individuality in conventional reality. In the Rosicrucian doctrines, the Pelican tears “open its own breast to feed its seven little ones”—this is merely symbolism for the Swan of Time splintering itself through the seven cosmic planes to supply the need of all souls with the nourishment of its self-same fundamental identity. As it has been shown, after all, there are “Seven Paths or Ways to the bliss of our existence, which is absolute Being, Existence, and Consciousness.” Alternately, they are the same Seven Paths that take us to the bliss of “Non-Existence.” Existence and non-existence, life and death, objective and subjective, light and dark, conventional reality and ultimate reality, Being and Be-ness—these are merely the terms for the two aspects of that great unborn cosmic atom which, considered as a whole, transcends the duality of them all and whose truly unknown nature gets lost in a unified meta-spirit somewhere beyond the Cosmos.

Notes and Sources:

**The first four-fold Tetragrammaton is the “Heavenly Man” or the Kabbalistic “Adam Kadmon.” Even this first four-fold Tetragrammaton is only a “secondary perfection” related to the “manifest planes” because the Soul as the 3rd Logos touches Atman and departs. Atman is the head of the manifest planes and only secondarily perfect. Adam Kadmon brings unity to the Universe since the touch of the Soul thrills through all his “limbs”, meaning he connects the seven objective planes with the three subjective ones—the complete Sephirothal Tree. As H.P. Blavatsky pointed out, the immaculate white disk, as the 1st Logos or the “Circle,” becomes Adam Kadmon on the “fourth” cosmic plane. This fourth cosmic plane, as a “ray” from the “Unit” of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Logos, corresponds to Atman.

The first four-fold Tetragrammaton is also the Jewish Jehovah, as Yod-He-Vav-He (or YHWH) in one of his three aspects. The first sephirah Kether, as the Ayin of nothingness, emanates Hokmah as the primordial point and Binah as the womb of the primordial point. For H.P. Blavatsky, Hokmah and Binah were a “synonym of Mahat” and corresponded to Jehovah. These three constitute the Kabbalistic immaculate white disk, the darkness of Space, and the central point of light. This triad breathes the Great Breath of life into the seven sephirot to establish the descent from Atman through the sephirah Gevurah into the objective realms below.

There is also a second and a third four-fold Tetragrammaton; these stretch across the seven objective planes and are truly only secondary perfections. In her Collected Writings, H.P. Blavatsky wrote, “The Duad doubled makes a Tetrad and the Tetrad doubled forms a Hebdomad.” The compiler of her writings is uncertain as to her meaning and reflects on her statement with his own, “A Tetrad doubled would be eight or an Ogdoad, while a Hebdomad would imply seven. This may be a typographical error, unless some other meaning is implied.” Exactly. Some other
meaning was indeed implied. The first, second, and third Tetragrammaton overlap, thereby accounting for a Hebdomad as opposed to an Ogdoad. The Tegrammaton is the Jewish example of the Greek Tectraktys system, so the four-fold combinations have to fit within ten planes, not twelve; therefore, there is an overlap. Atman is the lowest of the first Tetragrammaton but the highest of the second. Kama is the lowest of the second but the highest of the third. It is to this third Tetragrammaton that H.P. Blavatsky referred when writing, “Taken from the plane of matter, it is among other things, the lower Quaternary, the man of flesh and matter.” In Kabbalism, this lower Quaternary was often meant when the Tetragrammaton was explained in terms of Malkuth, the lowest of the ten sephirot.

***Thus, a simplified outline of a ten-fold system can be given: Parabrahman, Mulaprakriti, Mahat, Atman, Buddhi, Manas, Kama, Prana, Linga, Sthula. But in a seven-fold system, the arrangement is slightly different. Parabrahman equals Atman, Mulaprakriti equals spiritual Buddhi, and Mahat equals Manas. In her Collected Writings, H.P. Blavatsky established this system where Atman corresponds to Parabrahman, Buddhi to Mulaprakriti, and Manas to Mahat. But since Manas is dual, so is Mahat. H.P. Blavatsky alluded to this duality in her reference to Mahat as the “Higher Mind-Entity” of “Alaya-Akasa.” As Alaya, Mahat is spiritual Buddhi. As Akasa, Mahat is the crown of Manas. Thus, Mahat is “Buddhi-Manas.” In The Secret Doctrine, Mahat is often equated with its Alaya aspect of spiritual Buddhi or Mahabuddhi. For example, “UNIVERSAL SOUL is not the inert Cause of Creation or (Para) Brahma, but simply that which we call the sixth principle of intellectual Kosmos, on the manifested plane of being. It is Mahat, or Mahabuddhi, the great Soul, the vehicle of Spirit, the first primeval reflection of the formless CAUSE.” Please remember that Mahabuddhi is simply the shortened term for Mahat-Buddhi. In a seven-fold system, Mahat is interchangeably the 5th or the 6th cosmic principle.
A PRAYER FOR HUMILITY

O Father, give us the humility which realizes its ignorance,
Admits its mistakes, recognizes its need, welcomes advice, accepts rebuke.
Help us always to praise rather than to criticize,
To sympathize rather than discourage, to build rather than destroy.
And to think of others at their best, rather than at their worst.

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